



Florida Department of Transportation  
**SAFETY ADVISOR**  
DECEMBER



## December

If someone asks you, "When does winter start?" you will need a clarification of the question. The answer will depend on where you live, northern or southern hemispheres. It will also depend on what calendar you use for the start of winter, either for meteorologists or the astrological calendar which defines the winter solstice.

### Meteorological Calendar

Weather determines the seasons, with summer consisting of the warmest months and winter, the coldest months. Meteorologists need an exact length of time for the seasons, so that their recordkeeping is accurate and they can compare data more easily.

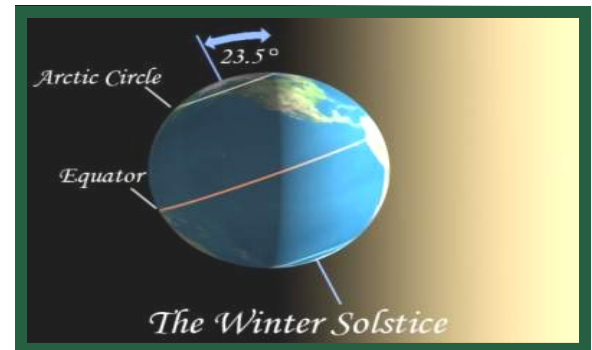
A definition was given to the seasons by the Societas Meteorologica Palatina, in 1780. They defined a season as having three months. That is the definition meteorologists have used since that time. Therefore, winter for meteorologists lasts for three months, starting on December 1st in the Northern Hemisphere and June 1st in the Southern Hemisphere.

### Astronomical Calendar

Solstices occur on the two days of the year when Earth is tilted the farthest away from the Sun, or when it is tilted the closest. The hemisphere tilted towards the Sun will have the longest days (summer), and the hemisphere the farthest away will have the shortest days (winter).

The winter solstice marks the shortest day and the longest night of the year. The sun appears at its lowest point in the sky, and its noontime elevation appears to be the same for several days before and after the solstice. Hence the origin of the word solstice, which comes from Latin solstitium, from sol, "sun" and -stitium, "a stoppage." Following the winter solstice, the days begin to grow longer and the nights shorter.

So, when does winter start for the Northern Hemisphere astronomically? The precise astronomical start of our winter solstice this year is December 21st at 6:38 p.m. EST.



<http://answers.yourdictionary.com>

<http://www.infoplease.com>

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

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# LOSS PREVENTION MANUAL

The Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Loss Prevention Program is effectively implemented through its Loss Prevention Manual (Topic No. 500-000-015-i). The Loss Prevention Manual (LPM) is continually monitored and revised as necessary by FDOT's Safety and Health personnel. The Loss Prevention Manual is also evaluated to assess the effectiveness of FDOT's employee safety/loss prevention program in accordance with Florida Statutes

## **PURPOSE**

The Manual establishes a Department uniform loss prevention program designed to reduce and/or eliminate the number of work-related injuries to employees and damage to materials or property due to injuries, illness, vehicle crashes, and incidents. It also establishes uniform operational plans and delineate responsibilities for maintaining a safe working environment for all employees of the Department.

## **SCOPE**

This Loss Prevention Manual applies to **all** employees and operations of the Department.

A Loss Prevention Manual Revision Task Team led and facilitated by FDOT Chief Safety Officer Marianne Trussell recently completed a thorough revision and update of the Manual. It was approved for publication and distribution by the Executive Board at the November 18, 2010 meeting. The Task Team members reviewed with attentiveness to all aspects and details of the Manual for compliance with but not limited to current standards of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), American National Standards Institute (ANSI), existing Department Policies and Procedures, and Florida Statutes. The Team members were Larry Lyons, Gentry Richardson, Shaun Stewart, Alaxon Pitts, David Maloney, William Wang, Mark Wiseman, Theo Buford, Dave Hammell, Michael Anzalone, Ken Cox, and Mark Eacker .

The **Manual** is available at the following addresses:

On the Internet at:

<http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/proceduraldocuments/procedures/proceduresbyofficedetail.asp?office=Safety&type=manual>

On the Infonet at:

<http://ombnet.co.dot.state.fl.us/forms/procedures/proceduresbyofficedetail.asp?office=Safety&type=manual>

The State Safety Office's website at:

<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety/>

# LOOK TWICE FOR MOTORCYCLES

Sharing the roads with motorcycles requires special attention on everyone's part. In 61 percent of all motorist vs motorcycle crashes in Florida, the motorist is at fault. A large portion of these crashes result from motorists failing to see the motorcyclist. This could be caused by poor visibility, excessive speed, lack of reflectivity on the part of the motorcyclist, internal and external vehicle distractions, and many other factors.

Florida's Motorcycle Safety Coalition encourages motorists to follow these safety tips:

- Search the traffic around you constantly and expect to see motorcycles.
- Check your blind spots before changing lanes or merging, especially in heavy traffic.
- Double-check traffic at intersections before you turn or pull out.
- Motorcycles can easily be hidden in traffic. Look for a helmet above, tires below, or a shadow alongside a vehicle that you can't see around.
- Leave at least a four-second distance between your car and a motorcycle in front of you. Note when a motorcycle passes a point in the road. If your vehicle passes the same point in less than four seconds, you're following too closely.
- When passing a motorcycle, give a full lane to the motorcycle. Do not share lanes!
- Keep a watchful eye at all times. Individual motorcycles may blend into a larger group and may be closer than you think.

- Watch out when turning left because most crashes between cars and motorcycles involve left turns at intersections.
- Stay attentive and focused because distracted driving is a major cause of car-motorcycle crashes.
- Make sure to always signal when changing lanes to ensure the motorcycle rider knows what action you intend to take.
- Remember that failing to yield right of way can result in the death or serious injury of a motorcyclist.
- Make sure to observe and obey all traffic laws, signs, and signals.

For more information, please visit our website [www.ridesmartflorida.com](http://www.ridesmartflorida.com) or e-mail suggestions, comments and questions regarding the program to Trenda McPherson @ [trenda.mcpherson@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:trenda.mcpherson@dot.state.fl.us).



# Holiday Safety Tips

Even in the midst of holiday celebrating, safety should come first. No matter what your decorating style, be sure to keep safety first this holiday season, particularly when choosing outdoor lighting.

If you are placing a Christmas tree on a patio, near an outdoor kitchen or on a patio, use the same guideline you would use inside the home. Place the tree away from barbeque pits, fire pits, and other heat sources. Do not block doorways. Be sure to use guy-wires to secure a large tree to a fence or ceiling.

Use only lights that have been tested by an independent laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories. Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Discard damaged sets and purchase new ones. Lights are very inexpensive these days and it is just not worth the risk to your home to use damaged holiday lights.

Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, the house, walls, fences, or other firm support to protect them from wind and rain damage. Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord, unless you are using the new lights that specify more strands per cord. Most exterior extension cords have three-prong (grounded) male and female plugs. Do not use any cord if the grounding leg has been removed or damaged. Extension cords should be placed against the wall to avoid tripping hazards.

Never try to force a three-prong male plug into a two-prong extension cord or wall outlet. To properly adapt a three-prong cord to a two-prong outlet, use a UL-approved adapter plug with an attached ground wire. Be sure that the ground wire is connected to a proper ground source, such as a cold water pipe or a grounding rod driven into the ground.



## *Holiday Safety Tips cont'd:*

Always use the proper step stool or ladder to reach high places. Do not hang popcorn chains or candy canes on trees if there are small children in the home. They may think that other tree ornaments are also edible.

Turn off all lights on trees and other decorations (inside the home and out!) when you go to bed or leave the house. Lights could short and start a fire. Never use electric lights on a metallic Christmas tree. The tree could become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and any person touching a branch could be electrocuted.

If using outdoor spotlights, place these above or beside the tree. Never fasten the lights to the tree.

Keep bubbling lights away from small children. The bright colors and bubbling movement can tempt curious children to break candle-shaped glass and attempt to drink the pretty liquid which contains hazardous chemicals.

Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable candle holders. Also keep candles away from other decorations and wrapping paper. Outdoors, be sure to place candles in heavy weighted, non flammable holders where they cannot be knocked down or blown over.

Use care with fire salts that produce lovely colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals which can cause vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.

Safety doesn't have to take a lot of time. It's often the little things such as blowing out a candle, unplugging decorations, watering a tree, or looking for the UL mark that can prevent a lifetime of regret. Take steps to protect your family today and commit a minute to Safety.



# *National Drunk and Drugged Driver Prevention Month*

Every day, 36 people in the United States die, and approximately 700 more are injured, in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver.

This December, during National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month (3D Month), consider what you can do to make injuries and deaths from impaired driving less of a threat.

## **The Problem**

- ◇ According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), about three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.
- ◇ In 2006, 13,470 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for nearly one-third (32%) of all traffic-related deaths in the United States.
- ◇ In one year, over 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. This accounts for less than 1% of the 159 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults each year.

**Alcohol-related crashes in the United States cost about \$51 billion a year.**

## **Protect Yourself and Your Family and Friends**

During the holiday season, and year-round, take steps to make sure that you and everyone you celebrate with avoids driving under the influence of alcohol. Following these tips from NHTSA can help you stay safe:

- ◇ Plan ahead. Always designate a non-drinking driver before any holiday party or celebration begins.
- ◇ Take the keys. Do not let a friend drive if they are impaired.
- ◇ Be a helpful host. If you're hosting a party this holiday season, remind your guests to plan ahead and designate their sober driver, always offer alcohol-free beverages, and make sure all of your guests leave with a sober driver.

**buzzed**  
driving is  
**drunk**  
driving  
designate a sober driver

<http://www.cdc.gov>

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/>

<http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org>

# Word Search Puzzle

G V Z S S L A V A D N A V Z J M P L  
I X O H K N L S K Q W J S Y M A G O  
F K D O G G O D E S I G N A T E D O  
T L Y L C X G I U S J F L D S T D K  
S Y T I L I B A T N U O C C A K Z T  
C S H D K J C N K A Q L W G S S O W  
Y H Q A X W E K D V R N E P P A V I  
T S R Y K S A I Q E V O S Y O T D C  
E E M I E K V N L Z W I C B M R B E  
F Z G R S E U C Z T E T J E U P J H  
A U P P R T Y N O A C N F N D R L S  
S H H S V C M D A B A E K A E P E C  
R N I I R X Q A R H O V P V M A V X  
Z T E O S G G H S G E E I S S I G C  
Y Y T E C I T S L O S R D O E P L L  
V O D R U G G E D S D P N E A R Q Y  
M R E H T A E W G A L S W I N T E R  
T U C P J C Z P O G Q M T E J Y P M

ACCOUNTABILITY  
CHRISTMAS  
DECORATIONS  
DESIGNATED  
DIVERSITY  
DRIVER  
DRUGGED  
DRUNK

FAMILY  
GIFTS  
HANUKKAH  
HOLIDAY  
KWANZAA  
LOOK TWICE  
LPM  
MOTORCYCLE  
PRESENTS

PREVENTION  
RESPECT  
SAFETY  
SEASONS  
SOLSTICE  
TASK TEAM  
TOYS  
WEATHER  
WINTER

**The Safety Advisor puzzle is generated from the  
<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/>, puzzle maker.  
Omissions or errors are possible and are the sole  
responsibility of the program  
and not the producers of this Newsletter.**

# SAFETY SLOGANS

*“Drive with reason during the holiday season”.*



## **Safety Hot Line (850) 245-1543**

You can report hazards by telephone.  
You can remain anonymous.  
Everything is confidential.

Action will be taken and you will  
be notified within 30 days.



This monthly newsletter is produced by the State Safety Office by Mark Eacker under the supervision of Marianne A. Trussell, the Department's Chief Safety Officer.

For content information, please call or email the editor, Mark Eacker, at:

850-245-1510 / [mark.eacker@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:mark.eacker@dot.state.fl.us)

Our internet address is: [www.dot.state.fl.us/safety](http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety)

Our intranet address is: [Infonet.dot.state.fl.us/safetyoffice/](http://Infonet.dot.state.fl.us/safetyoffice/)



### Safety Advisor Customer Satisfaction Survey

**We are interested in your opinion. In order to better serve your needs, please take a moment to fill out this brief questionnaire. Send to:**

**Local Fax: 850 245-1554**

**Via US Postal Service (or inter-office mail) to the address shown below.**

**Attention: Industrial Safety  
Florida Department of Transportation  
605 Suwannee Street, MS 53  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450**

Survey Questions	Yes	No
Are the Safety Advisor topics relevant to your day to day job?		
Do you use the Safety Advisor in any manner other than read it ?		

What would you suggest to improve the suitability of the Safety Advisor to your needs or to improve the overall quality? (Please be specific)

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Do you have any questions regarding Industrial Safety programs and/or operations? Please feel free to include your questions or comments.

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### Safety Slogan of the Month Entry Form

**You are encouraged to submit safety slogans at any time.**

**Slogans are judged on originality .**

**You may also email your slogans to [mark.eacker@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:mark.eacker@dot.state.fl.us)  
In the subject line of your email please write "Safety Slogan Entry".**

Please Print  
Safety Slogan

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Location/Office: \_\_\_\_\_  
District: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
				Hanukkah	PAY DAY	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
					PAY DAY	
19	20	21 Winter Solstice	22	23	24	25
					STATE HOLIDAY	Christmas Day
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Kwanzaa					PAY DAY STATE HOLIDAY	New Year's Day



**THE MONTH OF DECEMBER IS**  
*National Drunk and Drugged  
 Driving Prevention Month*  
*National Tie Month*  
*Safe Toys and Gifts Month*

